

## **What it means to be young in Bronze Age Crete**

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While young people are featured rather prominently in Cretan Bronze Age iconographic sources, their role in archaeological inquiries remains limited. This has been explained in the past by the limited visibility of their remains, but several recent excavations, such as those at the Sissi cemetery on the northern coast, have shown that juveniles sometimes comprise a considerable part of the funerary record. These new data have raised the potential of age identity studies for Bronze Age Crete. This presentation will show how the challenge of identifying the ‘young’ in Bronze Age contexts is twofold. First, we need to discern them in the field, which is often problematised by poor preservation conditions resulting in relatively low visibility. Careful excavation and on-site characterisation is of primary importance at this stage. The second stage of the identification process is situated at the ‘social’ level: how do we differentiate between the biological ‘juvenile’ or ‘subadult’ and the social ‘child’? Juvenile burials in Cretan Bronze Age contexts are often marked by a lack of distinction from ‘adult’ burials, which makes this second step even more challenging. Can we then differentiate between ‘children’ and ‘adults’? And more importantly, should we make this differentiation?